



PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING STAFF REPORT JANUARY 12, 2006

Project:	SAIGON VILLAGE ARCHITECTURE- (PLN2006-00147)
Proposal:	To consider a Planned District Minor Amendment for a change in architectural design for two previously approved retail buildings.
Recommendation:	Recommend to City Council
Location:	6044 Stevenson Boulevard in the Industrial Planning Area. APN 531-0240-033 (See map next page)
Area:	62,250 and 7,000 square foot buildings on a 6-acre lot
People:	Imperial Investment & Development, Applicant Fred Kim, Agent of Applicant Kevin Horn, RTKL Architects, Consultant Imperial Investment & Development, Owner Scott Ruhland, Staff Planner (510) 494-4453
Environmental Review:	This project is categorically exempt from CEQA per Section 15302(b), <i>Replacement of a commercial structure with a new structure of substantially the same size, purpose and capacity.</i>
General Plan:	Existing: High Volume Retail Proposed: No change proposed
Zoning:	Existing: Planned District, P-90-18 Proposed: No change proposed

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The proposed project is a request for a Planned District Minor Amendment to Planned District, P-90-18 for the re-design of two previously approved commercial buildings. A 62,250 and a 7,000 square foot building were approved by City Council on October 24, 2000. Since that time the property, and entitlements associated with the property, have been sold to another developer, Imperial Investment & Development. A building permit for construction of the buildings (under the previously approved design) was issued in May 2005.

The current owner intends to develop the site in generally the same manner as the previous owner. The site plan, building footprints and use of the buildings for commercial/retail and restaurants have not changed. However, the current owner intends to develop this site and the adjoining sites, commonly referred to 6000 Stevenson, as an international retail village with commercial uses, restaurants and entertainment uses. To that end, an architectural re-design of the buildings has been requested to match the overall theme and intent of the proposed development. This portion of the project is referred to as Saigon Village.



Figure 1: Aerial Map (2002) of Project Site and Surrounding Area.



[1 inch = 375 feet]

SURROUNDING LAND USES:

- North: Commercial uses
- South: Light industrial uses
- East: Light industrial and commercial buildings
- West: Commercial uses (City of Newark)

BACKGROUND AND PREVIOUS ACTIONS:

Planned District P-90-18 was approved by the City Council on May 6, 1991 for the development of commercial and industrial uses on site. PLN2000-00248, Planned District Major Amendment, was approved by City Council on October 24, 2000. This approval entitled the development of two retail buildings, 62,250 and 7,000 square feet, generally located on the south side of Stevenson Boulevard between Albrae Street and Encyclopedia Circle. Since that time this property and adjacent sites have been sold to the current owner and developer. The Conditions of Approval for P-90-18 state that any major modification to the approved buildings is subject to review and approval by City Council, and therefore the final action on this Planned District Minor Amendment will be taken by the City Council.

A General Plan Amendment application was filed in September 2004 to change the land use designation of the adjacent sites from Industrial to Commercial to allow the development of an international retail village. This process also included the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to analyze potential impacts. Public comment was taken for this EIR at the November 17, 2005 Planning Commission hearing. This international retail village project is pending preparation of the Final EIR and will move forward through the approval process in early 2006.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The proposed project is a request to re-design two previously entitled and approved commercial buildings, 62,250 and 7,000 square feet in size. The site plan and all other improvements associated with the development of these buildings have not changed. The applicant is requesting the re-design to match the overall intent and theme of the proposed international retail village project for which the General Plan Amendment has been requested. The applicant intends to develop the entire property with an international theme focused on different cultures and ethnicities throughout the world. Some background contextual information on the future development of the entire property is included in the enclosures. This particular portion of the project is focused on the Southeast Asian culture and has been identified as Saigon Village.

PROJECT ANALYSIS:

General Plan Conformance:

The existing General Plan land use designation for the project site is High Volume Retail. The proposed project is consistent with the existing General Plan land use designation for the project site because the proposed commercial building and associated uses are allowed in the High Volume Retail designation. The following General Plan Goals, Objectives and Policies are applicable to the proposed project:

- **Fundamental Goal 6:** *A unified City with thriving districts and emerging communities, each with it's own identity.*
- **Local Economy Goal 1:** *Increased job opportunities in Fremont for Fremont residents.*
- **Local Economy Goal 2:** *A strong municipal tax base.*
- **Local Economy Goal 3:** *A hierarchy of well-defined, vital commercial areas meeting the retail shopping, entertainment and service needs of the Fremont residents.*

- **Local Economy Objective 1.1:** *A significant increase in businesses providing job opportunities for Fremont workers.*
- **Local Economy Objective 2.1:** *An increased number of industrial and commercial businesses generating revenues to the City.*
- **Local Economy Objective 3.5:** *High-volume retail shopping opportunities for Fremont residents.*

Analysis

The project conforms to these goals and objectives of the General Plan because the approximate 70,000 square feet of commercial development will add to the local economy by providing jobs opportunities and increased tax base. The project also begins to create new commercial district with its own identity at this underutilized and deteriorating site. The intent of this project and overall development of the 6000 Stevenson properties will provide a unique and exciting shopping and entertainment destination for Fremont residents and the region. In particular, the re-design of the buildings will help to reinforce this new identity and create a new experience conforming to the Fundamental Goals of the General Plan.

Zoning Regulations:

The site is zoned Planned District, P-90-18. The re-design of the commercial buildings is considered a major modification to the approved design and requires City Council approval. No other changes are proposed. Although the site is a Planned District, the C-R, Regional Commercial zoning district is used to evaluate development standards for the site. The design and height of the buildings is in keeping with the standards and requirements of the C-R District. The 57 foot major middle tower is the exception to the 40-foot height limit of C-R district. However, height increases above the maximum are permitted for cupolas, domes, monuments and similar design elements when associated with a building.

Architecture:

The previous design of the buildings consisted of concrete tilt-up walls with painted stucco finish, hip metal roofs and glass/stucco facades. Tower elements with hip roofs were incorporated into the design for the larger 62,250 square foot retail building. Four towers are proposed at different locations of that building. The smaller 7,000 square foot building was designed in the same fashion as the larger retail building, but without the tower elements. (Architectural elevations of previous design included in the enclosures).

Building “A” - 62,250 Square Feet

The proposed design of the building maintains the same overall L-shape, size and tower elements of the previous design. However, material, color and design changes have been incorporated that express a different design principle than originally proposed.

Tower Elements

The tower element roof forms have the most recognizable change. The metal hip roofs have been replaced with open tubular steel frames that convey a design element of Vietnamese pagoda forms commonly seen in Asian architecture and design. The tower elements are referred to as the corner towers (38 feet), minor middle towers (29 feet), and the major middle tower (57 feet). The focal point of the building is the major middle tower element generally located in the center where the two portions of the building come together. This tower is 57 feet high and includes the 33 foot building base and a 24

foot steel framework that projects above the building. It is intended that the open framework be lit up at night to further emphasize this element.

Other design changes in the towers include decorative painted die-cut metal panels featuring patterns derived from Vietnamese textiles with two different designs proposed, one for the corner towers and one for the minor middle towers. Horizontal tubular steel has replaced the arched framework element located between the columns of the towers. The base of the columns were originally proposed as tile, and has now changed to rough granite finish stone.

Roof

The roof form has generally stayed the same with exception to the materials. The overall roof is flat but includes metal louver style roofing with EIFS (exterior acrylic) panels and reveals. A metal louvered roof is located on the canopy that protects the primary walkway along the retail frontage. Metals awnings above the primary entrances are also proposed.

Secondary and Tertiary Materials

Previous materials consisted primarily of a painted stucco base with reveals and glass windows along the retail tenant spaces. The primary material will still consist of a painted stucco base, however as briefly described, new materials have been proposed for various elements of the building. In summary:

- Hip metals roofs have been replaced with tubular steel roof frames.
- Arched metal frames have been replaced with horizontal tubular steel.
- Stucco panels have been replaced with decorative die-cut painted metal panels.
- Stucco fascia along the roof line has been replaced with EIFS (exterior acrylic) panels.
- Tile veneer at the base of the columns has been replaced with rough granite stone.

Colors

The color palettes for the buildings are derived from both traditional Vietnamese and French colonial architecture. The previous primary building colors of beige/sand have been replaced with warm light yellow and beige colors. The accent colors of turquoise and rust have been replaced with brighter yellows, deep orange, red and browns.

Building “B” – 7,000 Square Feet

The design of the 7,000 square foot building is somewhat similar to the design of the larger building. The building footprint is maintained as a rectangular building but now with a tower element approximately 40 feet in height. Building materials consist primarily of stucco and colored concrete with decorative design reveals cast into the stucco. Tubular steel is used as a design element on the tower and at the southwest corner of the building. Concrete banding with sand blasted finish is used break up the mass of the building and alternate with the stucco material.

Architectural Analysis

The proposed architecture for the two buildings is characterized by subtle interpretations of traditional Vietnamese architecture and design. Although, the overall form and shape of the building has not changed, design elements, materials and colors have changed. The subtle interpretations of the proposed design are appropriate for the overall theme and intent of the development. Creating this type of design is a challenge but can be achieved through suitable design elements constructed with high quality materials.

Tower Elements

Staff supports the design and scale of the tower elements as the primary method of achieving the intended design theme. The major middle tower will act as the main focal point. The open roof frame with the potential to be lit up will make a bold design statement bringing interest to the tower elements of the building. The corner towers will also anchor the building ends and help maintain a visual sense of entry.

However, two concerns exist at the building facades along each tower element as shown on north and west elevation. The portion of the building with flat roof adjacent to these corner elements does not have the same color or design treatment as the rest of the building. These areas are proposed with glass storefronts and plain painted stucco finish. An additional design element and/or roof form is needed in these locations to complete design. The applicant shall work with Staff during Development Organization review to refine these portions of the building (Condition A-8).

Roof

Staff supports the slight change in design to the roof and canopy along the building frontage. New awnings are also proposed that further enhance the design and sense of entry into the building.

Secondary and Tertiary Materials

Staff supports the proposed change in materials and believes the new design is of higher quality and can be maintained over time. The proposed changes are specific to this development and will be exclusive to this building. The change will help to attract interest in the development, more so than originally assumed, and help to make a design statement that can be maintained over time, especially as the rest of the project is built out.

Colors

Staff generally supports the color change with the added condition (A-6) that the applicant will continue to work with Staff to refine the color palette. The concern is that the yellow color may weather and age over time and appear dirty or worn. Past practice with yellow building colors has shown that, aesthetically, over time, they become more susceptible to “wear & tear”. It may also be worthwhile to conduct a field test of the colors on a portion of the building with Planning approval of the colors for the rest of the building.

Building “B” – 7,000 Square Feet

Staff supports the change in design for the 7,000 square foot building and believes the new design is a substantial improvement. The previous design was monotonous on all sides of the building with no interest or special features. The new building contains a tower element that will give prominence along Stevenson Boulevard; canopies and awnings at the primary entrances to provide a better sense of entry; and, interesting details such as pre-cast patterns embedded into horizontal stucco banding, board formed concrete with sand-blasted finish and horizontal tubular steel.

Environmental Review:

This project exempt from CEQA per Section 15302(b), *Replacement of a commercial structure with a new structure of substantially the same size, purpose and capacity.*

PUBLIC NOTICE AND COMMENT:

Public hearing notification is applicable. A total of 278 notices were mailed to owners and occupants of property within 300 feet of the site. The notices to owners and occupants were mailed on December 29, 2005. A Public Hearing Notice was published by The Argus on December 29, 2005.

ENCLOSURES:

Exhibits:

- Exhibit "A" Architectural Elevations
- Exhibit "B" Findings and Conditions of Approval
- Exhibit "C" Color and Material Sample Board
- Previously Approved Color and Material Sample Board (informational)

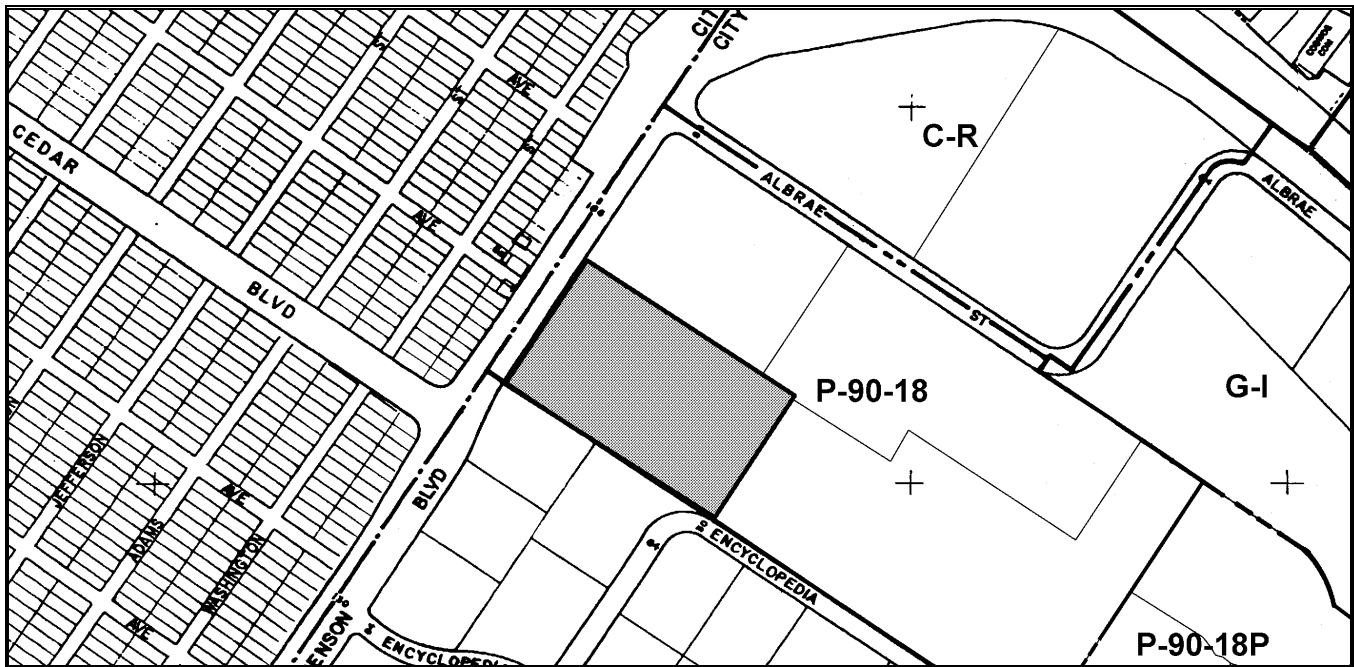
Informational Items:

1. Site Plan
2. Applicant Design Statement
3. Contextual Design Philosophy and Conceptual Renderings
4. Previously Approved Architectural Elevations

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Hold public hearing.
2. Find PD Minor Amendment, PLN2006-00147, is in conformance with the relevant provisions contained in the City's existing General Plan. These provisions include the designations, goals and policies set forth in the General Plan's Local Economy Chapter as enumerated within the staff report.
3. Recommend City Council approve PD Minor Amendment, PLN2006-00147, to amend P-90-18 for the redesign of two previously approved commercial buildings in conformance with Exhibit "A" (Architectural Elevations), Exhibit "B" Findings and Conditions of Approval and Exhibit "C", Color and Material Sample Board.

Existing Zoning
Shaded Area represents the Project Site



Existing General Plan

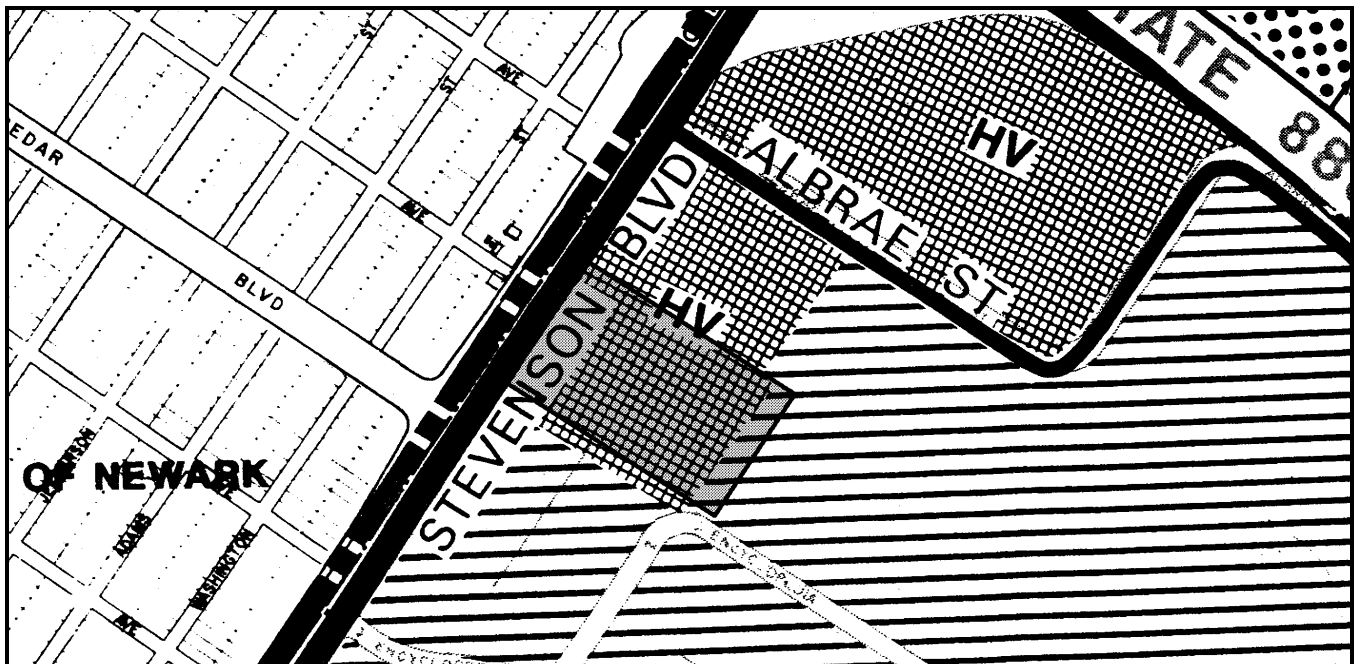


EXHIBIT "B"
Saigon Village
PLN2006-00147

FINDINGS

The following findings are made by the Planning Commission based on information in the staff report and testimony at the public hearing on January 12, 2006, incorporated hereby:

1. The proposed change in design would not have a substantial adverse effect on traffic circulation and on the planned capacity of the street system or other public facilities or services because the size of the building is not changing;
2. The proposed change in design would not have a substantial adverse economic effect on nearby uses because the retail intent of the building is similar to the previously approved use;
3. The proposed use would not have a substantial adverse impact on the general welfare of persons residing in the community because the use is in a area designated for commercial and high volume retail uses with sufficient transportation access;
4. The use is consistent with the General Plan.

Conditions of Approval

- A-1 The approval of PLN2006-00147 shall conform to Exhibit "A" (Architectural Elevations), Exhibit "C" (Color and Material Sample Board) and all the conditions of approval set forth herein.
- A-2 Plans shall be submitted to the **Development Organization** for appropriate revisions to the building permit and for review and approval to ensure conformance with relevant codes, policies, and other requirements of the Fremont Municipal Code.
- A-3 The applicant shall meet all requirements in the 2001 California Fire Code and local Ordinance #2485.
- A-4 The applicant shall provide a maintenance statement describing how the long term maintenance of the buildings will be carried out, particularly as it relates to the die cut panels, metal louver roof and tubular steel lattice. Also, a method to control birds from perching and nesting within the lattice elements will be submitted with construction documents and reviewed by Development Organization staff during the building permit revision process.
- A-5 Signage and/or logos are not part of this approval. Signage for the buildings will be approved as part of an overall Planned Sign Program for Saigon Village.
- A-6 The applicant shall further refine the colors and/or conduct a field test for final color approval subject to review and approval of the Development Organization.
- A-7 Minor modifications to the design, materials and colors may be permitted subject to review and approval of the Development Organization.
- A-8 The applicant shall further refine the corner building facades adjacent to the towers subject to review and approval of the Development Organization.